**Literacy Report 2015**

Level 1 Literacy

17 senior students with 55 credits or more failed to achieve literacy in 2015. There is a very high positive correlation between overall credits gained and literacy, therefore all students with less than 55 credits have been discounted and the rest have been highlighted (see Appendix A). A comment has been written in column I for students who have a possible reason for not gaining literacy. Some students in non-mainstream programmes may achieve credits but do not have the opportunity to gain literacy from those credits. There are two students remaining without comments and one of these had severe attendance issues, going on an extended holiday in term 1 and then absent for a *tangi* in Australia for six weeks in terms 3-4.

All year 12 and 13 students who have not gained literacy will be enrolled into 12EA, or 11EA if that is more appropriate to their individual needs in 2016. Once classes have settled, SCT will be checking that all students requiring literacy are in one of these two classes.

11EA 2015

The goal for 11EA in 2015 was to revamp the course to focus on teaching literacy skills which the Literacy Unit Standards would overlay. Two Communication Skills unit standards, which are based around practical literacy skills, were added to this course and the AVAILLL reading programme was rewritten to be included in this class. Appendix B shows the overall student results for 11EA from 2013 to 2015, and again this year there has been an increase in the standards achieved from 67.1% to 80.1% of the total credits offered in this English course. Also interesting to note is the fact that 11EA students have no more Not Achieved grades in English than all classes at decile 6 secondary schools across the country.

While gaining qualifications is an important aspect of education, schools also have a responsibility to prepare students for adult life beyond school. The Literacy Unit Standards (LUS) are based on level 4 of the Adult Literacy Progressions, the level of literacy required for school leavers to “fully participate in new Zealand society” (Tertiary Education Commission, 2008). Therefore, LUS are meeting those needs. In addition, Communication Skills unit standards are based on practical tasks and students learn to fill in forms and write letters of inquiry and complaint, tasks which will be useful for life beyond school. I strongly believe that this course is helping to meet the diverse needs of some of our academically at- risk students at Freyberg.

12EA and 13EA

With the success of the revamped 11EA course, part way through 2015, 12EA was revamped. It is made up of Communication Skills unit standards, which are overlaid by LUS for students who do not already have literacy. This course allows students to gain level 2 credits through unit standards that are teaching them practical literacy skills for life. All students who have not gained literacy are expected to be enrolled in this course.

With the early success of 12EA in the second part of 2015, a course has been developed along the same lines for year 13 students and is being introduced in 2016. The fact that two classes have immediately been filled proved the need for this course. While initially a pre-requisite for this course is for students to have already gained literacy, in future years, students who already have enough credits to pass NCEA level 2, could gain their literacy credits in this course along with gaining level 3 credits. The focus of all the EA courses is firstly for students to gain level 1 literacy.

Common Errors

Based on a model seen by BRK on sabbatical, staff were surveyed to identify the common writing errors that they would like to distinguish. Two errors were introduced each term and teachers in all classes were encouraged to remind students of them. Initially there were supposed to be two per term, but give the seniors are only present for four weeks in term 3, I decided to use the fourth term to revise the six we had covered with their junior classes.

Academic leaders and Mentors

Part of the role of academic leaders and mentors was to track the literacy of their students. SCT worked closely with academic leaders and was available for consultation with mentors. As a result of this, students who would not otherwise get literacy completed English literacy standards outside of class to ensure they were able to get NCEA qualifications. Among these were year 13 students who, without literacy, would have left school with no qualifications instead of level 3.

Area for Development in 2016

Many of our international students intend going on to do tertiary study in New Zealand and therefore need to gain UE literacy. To achieve UE literacy through English, they need to achieve the 2.4 writing portfolio, arguably the hardest standard across all level 2 standards, particularly for people for whom English is not their first language. At the end of 2015, Robert Elder, Wendy Jochem and I started to brainstorm alternative pathways for them. This is an important area that needs more investigation in 2016

**References**

Tertiary Education Commission (2008). *Learning progressions for adult literacy.* Wellington: Government Print.